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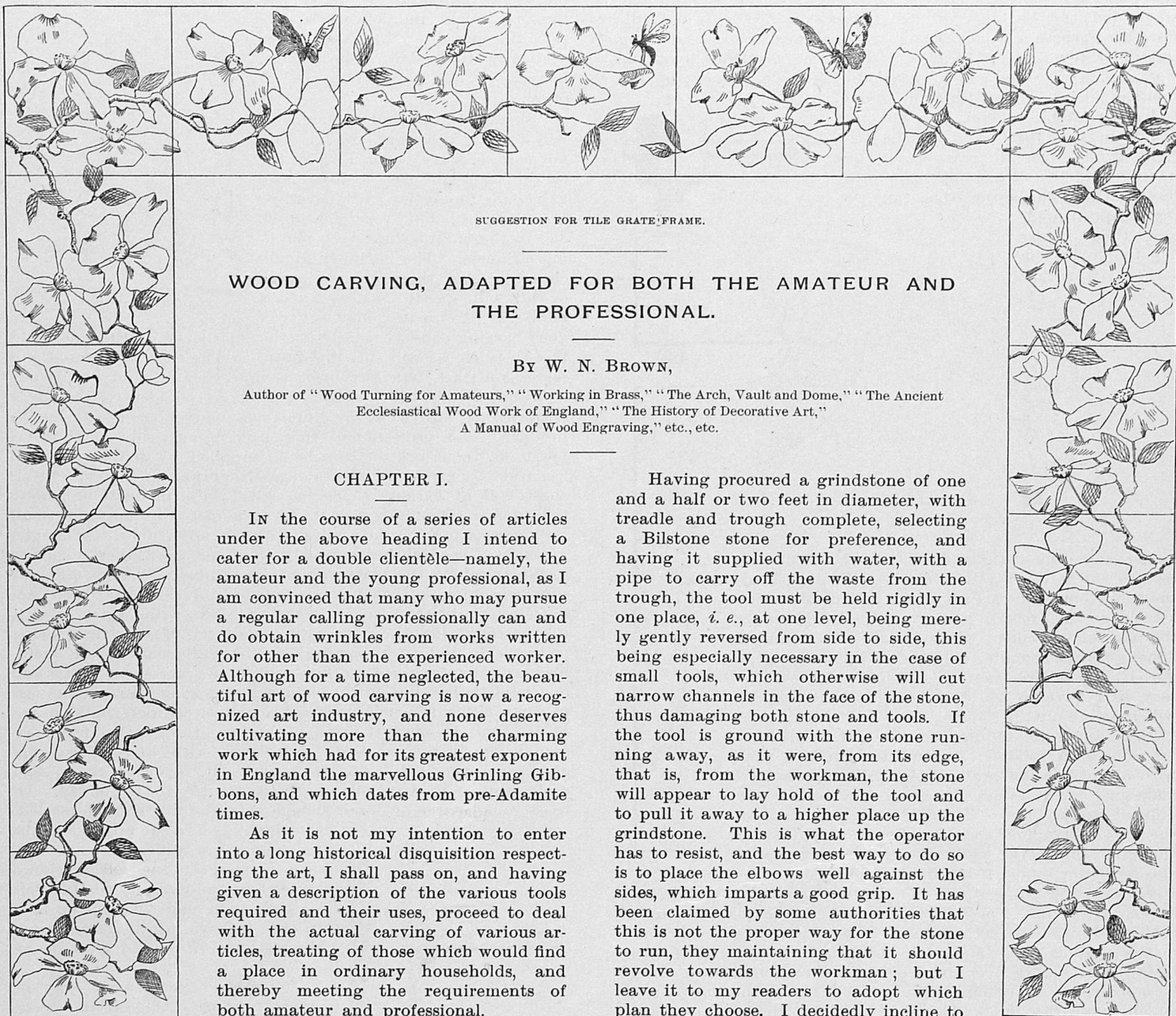
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



SUGGESTION FOR TILE GRATE FRAME.

WOOD CARVING, ADAPTED FOR BOTH THE AMATEUR AND THE PROFESSIONAL.

BY W. N. BROWN,

Author of "Wood Turning for Amateurs," "Working in Brass," "The Arch, Vault and Dome," "The Ancient Ecclesiastical Wood Work of England," "The History of Decorative Art,"
A Manual of Wood Engraving," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

IN the course of a series of articles under the above heading I intend to cater for a double clientèle—namely, the amateur and the young professional, as I am convinced that many who may pursue a regular calling professionally can and do obtain wrinkles from works written for other than the experienced worker. Although for a time neglected, the beautiful art of wood carving is now a recognized art industry, and none deserves cultivating more than the charming work which had for its greatest exponent in England the marvellous Grinling Gibbons, and which dates from pre-Adamite times.

As it is not my intention to enter into a long historical disquisition respecting the art, I shall pass on, and having given a description of the various tools required and their uses, proceed to deal with the actual carving of various articles, treating of those which would find a place in ordinary households, and thereby meeting the requirements of both amateur and professional.

TOOLS, THEIR USES, AND GRINDING.

As in wood carving, turned work is very often employed in combination, I would recommend the purchase of those two most useful adjuncts of the workshop—the lathe and slide rest, which although not exactly a portion of the wood carver's outfit, are still very necessary, and should be included where at all possible. The lathe I would counsel the procuring of is one adapted to metal turning, as by this wood can be fashioned, while a wood turner's lathe is not suited for metal work. As a fact, the slide rest can be done away with for wood turning, but where metal is at all included, it should form a portion of the shop's equipment. For those who may use a slide rest, it is a good rule in setting the tool to fix it at the height of the centres—*i. e.*, at the height of the point of the back centre. Further remarks upon the lathe and its uses are unnecessary here, as I presume my readers are well acquainted therewith.

With respect to the grinding of tools, a matter not quite so much understood as many people imagine, unless this is properly done satisfactory work is quite impossible, it being an absolute necessity that all tools should be well and keenly sharpened, and it is usually the difference in the tools which denote the professional and the amateur, the former generally paying the greatest attention to the edges, while the latter looks more after the handles. At the outset I would remind my readers that two qualities, often, by the way, lacking, are necessary to the proper grinding of tools, *viz.*, patience and determination, and in the case in question they are especially necessary, seeing that the grinding of tools is a laborious and disagreeable occupation, which is likely to be delayed as long as possible. This should not be, and when it is done, the grinding should be done properly. In these remarks I will take one tool—a chisel—the method of grinding which will generally serve for almost any other tool. The main object in grinding is to produce a bevel on one or both sides of a blade, in order to reduce the metal to a thin cutting edge, and this bevel must not be too short, but be well carried up the blade, or the angle of edge will not be small enough.

Having procured a grindstone of one and a half or two feet in diameter, with treadle and trough complete, selecting a Bilstone stone for preference, and having it supplied with water, with a pipe to carry off the waste from the trough, the tool must be held rigidly in one place, *i. e.*, at one level, being merely gently reversed from side to side, this being especially necessary in the case of small tools, which otherwise will cut narrow channels in the face of the stone, thus damaging both stone and tools. If the tool is ground with the stone running away, as it were, from its edge, that is, from the workman, the stone will appear to lay hold of the tool and to pull it away to a higher place up the grindstone. This is what the operator has to resist, and the best way to do so is to place the elbows well against the sides, which imparts a good grip. It has been claimed by some authorities that this is not the proper way for the stone to run, they maintaining that it should revolve towards the workman; but I leave it to my readers to adopt which plan they choose. I decidedly incline to the former. If the tool is not held squarely and level across the face of the stone, the bevel will be broader in one place than another, the edge of the tool being accordingly slantwise, and if only for a moment the tool is permitted to slip, a fresh surface or bevel will have been made by the stone.

As regards the proper sizes of tool bevels or angles, no hard and fast rule can be laid down, the degree being determinable by the special requirements of the tools, bearing in mind that for soft and fibrous woods the edge cannot be too keen, and that consequently the bevel must be long or some distance up the blade, while for hard woods and metals the angle must not be so deep or acute, though the edge must be kept sharp. This knowledge will come with practice, and bearing this in mind, it will be understood that to grind tools properly requires both practice and perseverance. Beside the uneven bevel, into which youngsters, careless workmen and amateurs are particularly liable to fall, another very common danger is the production of a rounded surface in lieu of a flat or hollow one, as the case may be. This is generally produced through paying more attention to the grinding of the edge than the bevel. The workman should always let the extreme edge take care of itself, and concentrate his attention upon the centre of the bevel, grinding the tool till it is seen that the tool edge lies flat upon the stone, when the grinding will have been effected.

The operator must bear in mind that success depends upon the rigid and level, but not too heavy, holding of the tool upon the stone. In traversing a tool along the stone, sway the body from side to side, as if the arms only are moved, the result will be an imperfect bevel, but a very little practice will enable the work to be done satisfactorily. When done, test the edge with a square, and if found untrue, remedy the defect. The grinding on the stone having been satisfactorily accomplished, the edge must be set to make the tool sharp and keen on an oilstone. This operation really appears far easier than it is, and it is in this sharpening up especially that the danger of spoiling the bevel by rounding occurs.

What is really to be aimed at is the production of another

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small, but very decided bevel, at the edge of the one already made, and the beginner will find this job decidedly difficult. For this purpose a good Arkansas stone must be got, and on this put a few drops of clear oil. Then set the stone upon the work bench with one end towards you, as the movement of the tool should be too and fro, from end to end of the stone. Then grip the tool firmly in your left hand, placing the right firmly over it, grasping it, but having the first three fingers pointing downwards towards the edge, thus giving a capital hold, and then laying the tool upon the stone at a rather

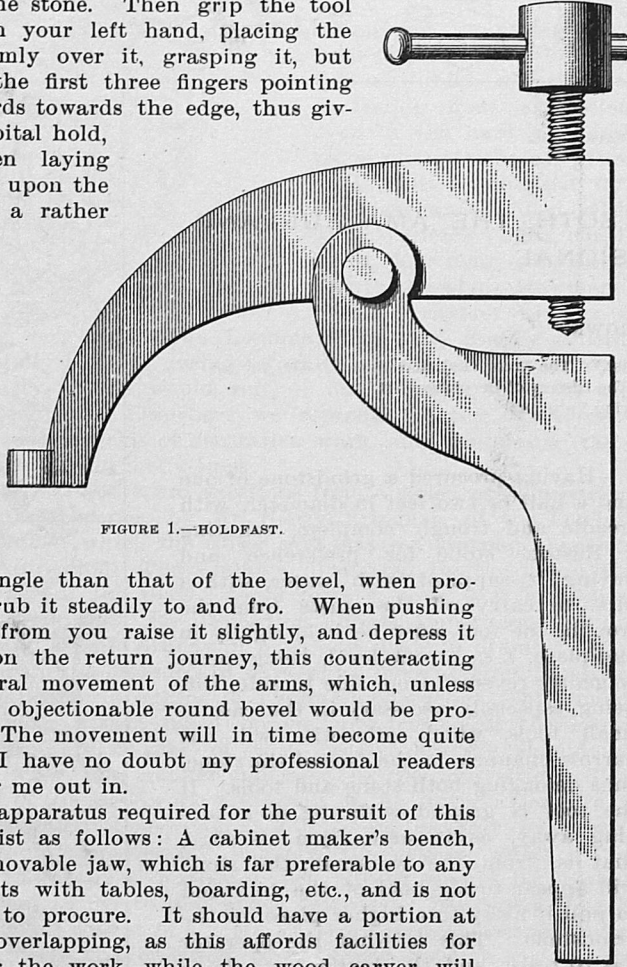


FIGURE 1.—HOLDFAST.

longer angle than that of the bevel, when proceed to rub it steadily to and fro. When pushing the tool from you raise it slightly, and depress it a trifle on the return journey, this counteracting the natural movement of the arms, which, unless done, an objectionable round bevel would be produced. The movement will in time become quite easy, as I have no doubt my professional readers will bear me out in.

The apparatus required for the pursuit of this art consist as follows: A cabinet maker's bench, with a movable jaw, which is far preferable to any makeshifts with tables, boarding, etc., and is not difficult to procure. It should have a portion at the top overlapping, as this affords facilities for changing the work, while the wood carver will also be better served if he provides his bench with a second screw, when it will be adapted for planing and sawing as well as carving, especially if the vice be so placed as to accommodate itself with the screws. The fixing of the work is a matter of some importance, and for this purpose a holdfast, illustrated at Figure 1, or some much similar contrivance should be employed. This implement consists of a round bar of iron, which passes through a hole made for the purpose in the bench, or it can be permanently fixed thereto if preferred. The arm is hinged on to the bar of iron, being raised or depressed by means of a screw, which works on the top of the bar, fixing the block of wood to the bench in the position desired. They can be procured in all sizes adapted to every description of work. A tool rack, which can either be attached to the wall or the bench, and a clamp, similar to that illustrated at Figure 2, will also be necessary. This is very handy, particularly for the fixing of

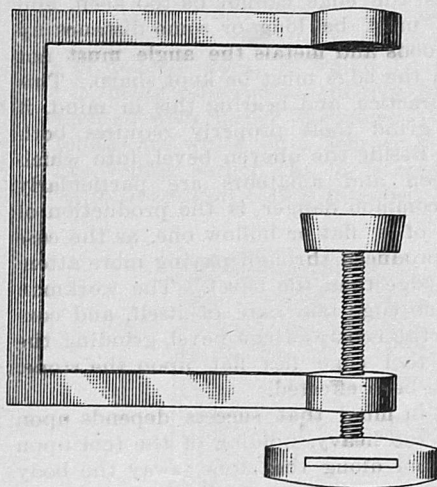


FIGURE 2.—CLAMP.

small work to the bench, more especially of the "flat" description, and a hand vice, which will be found handy in the carving of small and delicate work, should also be included in the workman's outfit, as also a mallet and small hammer, neither being too heavy. As my readers are possibly aware, the principal tools consist of chisels and gouges of various sizes and of a variety of shapes, and as these are not particularly expensive, the best quality goods only should be procured, as these will in the long run prove the cheapest. In Figure 3 I illustrate the cutting edges of some of these, A being the common gouge, B the ordinary chisel, C the parting tool, an exceedingly useful article, D a spoon bit for the cleaning out of under cut work, and E the shape of four grounding punches, employed for the roughening of the ground work of a design, and answering a similar purpose to chasing in metal work. A brace and

bit will be found useful for removing unnecessary wood in certain positions, and, of course, beside the punches illustrated there are many others—both general, kept in stock, and special—made to order.

Sheets of glass and emery cloth will also be necessary, though I do not counsel them being used by the carver, and in fact a man who values his reputation will never, or at the most, but very sparingly, call in the aid of these very tempting adjuncts. The beginner should certainly give them a wide berth, or he will speedily acquire a bad habit hard to break. The beauty of good carving consists mainly in the sharpness of the lines, and this these cloths will speedily destroy. The tools illustrated will serve as a start, but, of course, as time goes on and proficiency is attained, they will require to be largely added to, though it is surprising with what few appliances marvellous effects can be produced, and professional wood carvers, as a rule, employ but few tools, their lack of these being supplied by deftness of manipulation. Several of the articles comprised in the carpenter's chest will at various times be called into requisition, among them being a handsaw, about eighteen inches in length, a small back saw, a few key hole saws, with an adjustable saw handle, a couple of spokeshaves—one large and one small, these in many instances taking the place of the plane, three mallets of different sizes (speaking of when some amount of skill has been acquired), two or three cold wedges or chisels with which to split up the rough logs, a stock, with a good set of bits, these being particularly useful for pegging or plugging purposes, an Archimedian screw for small work, a couple of squares—one large and one small, a bevel, a cutting and working guage, a rack compass to carry either a pencil or cutter, a pair of callipers, half a dozen of files and the same of rasps, of various sizes, a two feet measure, a pair of pincers, and a glue pot with some thoroughly good glue, constituting the ordinary outfit, to which the special tools peculiar to wood carving will require to be added. Of these some couple of dozen should comprise all that are needed,

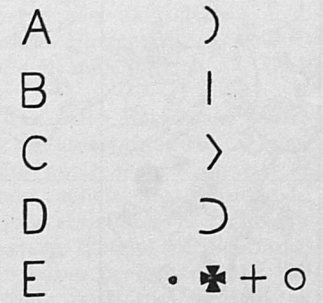


FIGURE 3.—CUTTING EDGES OF CHISELS, GOUGES AND PUNCHES.

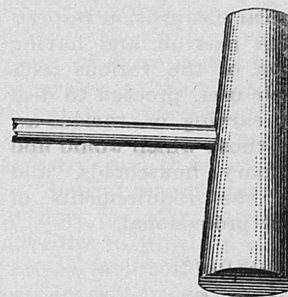


FIGURE 4.—CROSS BAR HANDLE.

of which half a dozen should be flat gouges of different sizes, two deeper gouges, two chisels, two spoon bits, the majority of the tools ranging from one-eighth of an inch to once inch in width, larger than these seldom, if indeed ever, being called for. Now as regards what may be termed properly the carving tools, let me impress upon the workman, and especially the beginner, that the handles be of some hard wood, and polished, that the thickest part be in the middle, and that it be quite twice as long as the metal tool, in order to give the workman a firm, steady grasp, and, above all, that the tools be fixed straightly and truly in the handles, in order that proper work may be accomplished—this last being especially important. In Figure 4 I illustrate a form of handle which will at times be found very useful. It is, as will be seen, in the form of a cross bar, similar to that on a gimlet, with this difference, that it is thicker at one end than the other, this inequality affording a better resting place for the hand, the forefinger of which, acting as a guide, will generally reach very nearly to the point of the tool, thus acting as a safeguard in the event of a miss—not at all unlikely, by the way, in the case of a beginner. Tools with these handles are very useful in small work, as also will be found a good penknife, with three blades, all of which should be stumpy and pearshaped, and there should also be provided a few wood engraver's tools—that is, "gravers" and "tinters," fitted in half-flat handles, and very useful for the cutting of very fine lines in foliage and portraiture, and a few of the carvers special files and rasps, the first named being those gener-

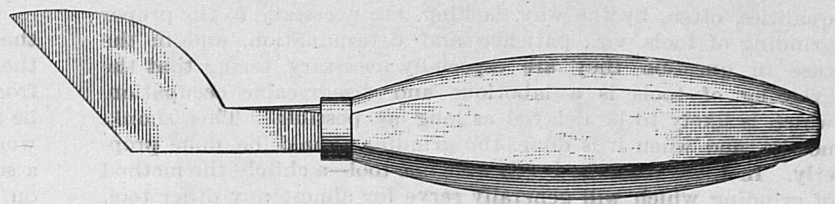


FIGURE 5.—ROUGH TOOL.

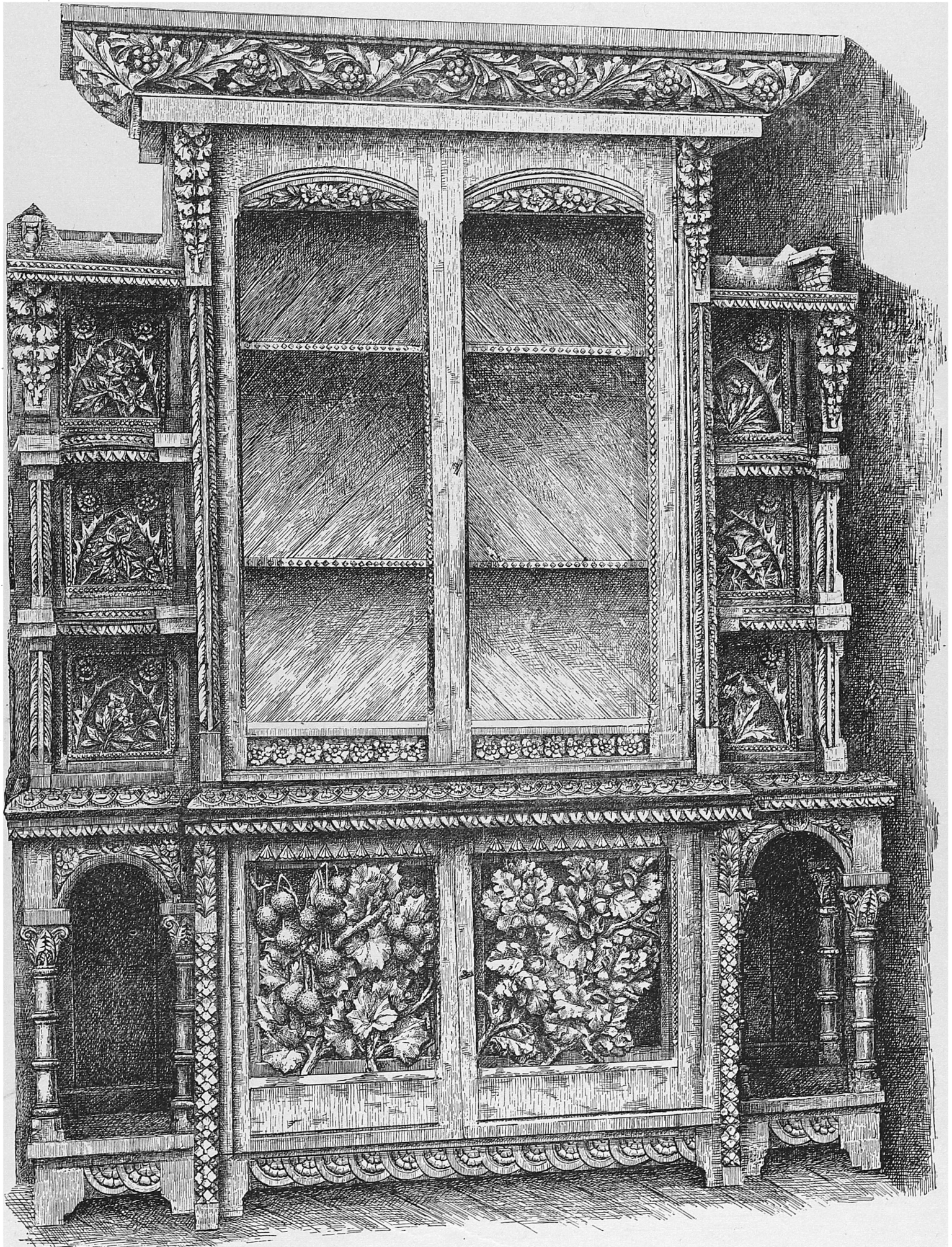
ally employed by cabinet makers, these tools being flat on one side and round on the other, and of different sizes and degrees of coarseness. Some of which are fine on one side only and

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plain on the other, for passing between carved work, must be purchased, as also several in a variety of shapes, such as flat, round, turned ups at one end and down at the other, three cornered, and so on, according to requirements, but these will not be needed yet awhile. Another handy tool, a knife, is illustrated at Figure 5, this being particularly useful for rough work and for working out the outlines, and generally the tool can be made up at home. In concluding this chapter I would impress upon the workman the desirability of acquiring the "knack" of

carving with both hands, as if he can only cut with the right hand he will find himself at times seriously hampered in his work. In my next chapter I purpose dealing with the important subject of woods and modeling.

ARTISTIC MANTELS.—Some good ideas for decorative coloring may be obtained from inspection of some of the artistic mantel pieces of variegated marbles of different descriptions united in the designs.



CARVED CHINA CABINET.

DESIGNED BY BENN PITMAN, CARVED BY THE PUPILS OF THE CINCINNATI ART SCHOOL.